

Gatehouse Development Initiative

Meeting Wednesday 26 September 7.30pm Community Centre

Present: D Steel (Chair); P Addison; I Burnie; R Forster; S Harris; W McKie; A Mitchell; J Morton; K Smyth.

Apologies: T Burnie; R Dean; D Finlay; M Hannay; J Jameson; J Russell.

2. **Minutes of 25 July meeting.** Accepted.

3. **Matters arising:** No matters arising.

4. TIC

D Steel reported that a workshop had been held on the 22 August for those businesses which had expressed an interest in operating the TIC. Representatives from other communities whose tourist information facilities may also be affected, as well as representatives from Dumfries and Galloway Council, and other tourist bodies. Visit Scotland outlined the different patterns for partnership working with Visit Scotland currently running in other parts of Scotland. For Gatehouse the three options of a business working from the current premises, from their own premises or from the Mill on the Fleet will be looked at. Visit Scotland will shortly write to each party to arrange further discussions. Visit Scotland agreed at the workshop to provide details of costings and other figures to the interested parties in order to allow them to work up their proposals. Key points raised during a lengthy discussion included the observation that Visit Scotland branding is important. Langholm had seen their TIC visits plummet following a change in provision. The car park site is still the firm preference of the meeting and of the community. K Smyth reiterated the Mill's position as a fall back option and only interested if the current location proves impossible. It was reported that D Wilson of economic regeneration is keen to encourage a social enterprise option, and the meeting was keen that the GDI should remain involved and part of the solution. Disappointment was again expressed with Visit Scotland and its decision making process, however it was noted that both the Council and Visit Scotland would be keen to see a successful outcome to what is a pilot process in the region. It was also noted that pressure on Visit Scotland has resulted in the current TIC being kept open for most of this season.

5. Current Projects

CADISPA: The report is due in October.

Country Market: Running smoothly. The friends of the Mill have agreed to reinstate their annual summer market at the Mill.

Economic Development: It was reported that some initial inspection by a surveyor has taken place re the possibility of new housing in Garries Wood.

Garries Park: *The Sensory Garden* was opened on 12 August. Councillor Tommy Jaques attended. I Burnie expressed her disappointment that few members of the GDI had attended. *Wildflower Meadow.* The new noticeboard has been installed and the meadow has had its end of season cut. *Noticeboard.* K Smyth had spoken to Ian McLelland re the chip van sign to no avail. The Chairman has also raised the matter with the Provost.

New Town Hall: Nothing to report.

Port Macadam: The Council have been asked to spray the path but say they can't. Funding will be sought from the Community Council paths fund. Potential funders have stated that they cannot give a grant for the harbour unless there is a lease in place. A lease would bring additional responsibilities for the GDI. The feedback from the CADISPA report will be looked at before discussing further. In the meantime A Mitchell will check out liabilities and other issues with other privately run piers in the region although Port Macadam is likely to be more historical/recreational than an active water sports/marina set-up.

Walks: A letter has been received back from Amey Highways outlining their requirements and issues with creating a path. R Forster believes there may be sufficient space at the bottom of the bank next to the field fence to create one.

A meeting has taken place with the Forestry Commission re monitoring of walks. Their problems in carrying this out are mainly down to personnel. I Brown who will shortly be the NSA ranger should be able to carry out the monitoring with the assistance of the various walking groups. There has been no update on the new-style forestry boards being trialed in Cally Woods. D Steel has received costings for updating and reprinting the purple walks leaflet. A request for funding has been submitted. The Cally Park booklet is at the printer. McMillan Hotels are taking a further 4000 copies. The GDI will have 2000 copies.

Web Site: Running smoothly.

Wind Turbine: Generating power. Some teething troubles still which are being dealt with as they arise.

6. Any Other Business

W McKie reported that core funding is being applied for. Cost are likely to be up partly due to the Turbine insurance, although this should be recouped back from income in due course. New charity regulations mean that between Companies House and OSCR there will be more accountant's time to be paid for. A Mitchell reiterated to all that he is happy to provide help and assistance and training for applications for funding.

It was also noted that the Council logo needs to be added to the town website.

7. **Dates of future meetings:** 28 November; 30 January

